Historical Sketch of the Presbytery of East Hanover

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

PRESBYTERY

OF

EAST HANOVER,

VIRGINIA.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The committee appointed by the Presbytery at its meeting held on the 13th day of November, 1886, respectfully submit the following:

The old Presbytery of "Hanover" was created and organized in the year 1755, with six ministers, viz.: Samuel Davies, John Todd, Alexander Craighead, Robert Henry, John Wright, and John Brown. It held within its bounds almost all the territory in Virginia between the Atlantic Ocean and the western boundaries of what was then the colony, and was afterwards the State, and also what is now the region embracing the States of Kentucky and Tennessee.

On the 29th October, 1829, upon the application of this Presbytery, which, although it had been reduced in its bounds, was still very large, the Synod of Virginia divided the then existing Presbytery of Hanover by a resolution as follows:

S829

"1. That the petition for division be granted.

"2. That the dividing line between the Presbyteries to be formed be the western boundaries of the counties of Brunswick, Dinwiddie, Chesterfield, Henrico, Hanover, and Spotsylvania, including those counties and all below them within the present limits of the Presbytery of Hanover, in the lower Presbytery.

"3. The lower Presbytery shall bear the name of East Hanover Presbytery, and the upper one the name of West Hanover Presbytery.

"4. The Presbytery of East Hanover shall hold its first meeting at Portsmouth, on the second Thursday of December next, at 11 o'clock A. M., and shall be opened with a sermon by the Rev. Jesse H. Turner, or in case of his absence, by the oldest Moderator present."

The Presbytery of East Hanover thus commenced its separate

existence. In 1830 this Presbytery reported to the Synod of Virginia at Winchester twelve ministers, eight churches, and three candidates. The roll embraced the following: Jesse H. Turner, W. C.; William J. Armstrong, pastor First Church, Richmond, with 363 communicants; Stephen Taylor, pastor Shockoe Hill church, Richmond, 112 communicants; Shepard H. Kollock, pastor Norfolk church, 210 communicants; Amasa Converse, editor; Edward McLaughlin, chaplain; Joseph Nimmo, W. C.; James S. Hamner, W. C.; John C. Smith, pastor Portsmouth church, 55 communicants; Jonathan Silliman, pastor New Kent church, 27 communicants; Joseph E. Curtis, W C.; Eben H. Snowden, W. C.; Brunswick church, vacant, 18 members; Petersburg church, vacant, 210 members; Salem and Pole Green church, vacant, 47 members; candidates, Theodorick Pryor, John C. Holt, Aristides Smith.

At that time the bounds of East Hanover Presbytery were as designated by the resolution of the Synod in 1829. Some changes in its boundaries have subsequently taken place under action by the Synod, and they may be now designated as follows: The boundary line between Virginia and North Carolina, from the Atlantic to the western side of Brunswick county; a line thence along the boundary lines of Brunswick, Nottoway, Amelia, and Powhatan, on the western side of these counties, and including Goochland, Caroline, Spotsylvania, and King George, and including all the territory from those internal lines out to the Atlantic. It embraces, therefore, thirty-nine counties, and within its bounds are the cities of Richmond and Manchester, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Williamsburg, Petersburg, and Fredericksburg, and a number of smaller towns and villages.

Careful historic search seems to have demonstrated, with reasonable certainty, that the oldest organized Presbyterian church in Virginia existed, and still exists, within the bounds of this Presbytery. And we feel authorized to go farther, and say that these researches have established a strong probability (which will stand until weakened or destroyed by evidence that may be hereafter discovered,) that this was the oldest organized church of our denomination in America. Until within the past year, we had been resting upon the impression made by previous historians, and briefly summed up in the following words, used in the elaborate "Presbyterian Encyclopædia," compiled under the editorship of Rev. Doctor Alfred Nevin, viz.: "Shortly after the ordination of Rev. Francis Makemie, the date of which is not known, he came to this country and settled in Maryland, in 1683, where he organized the church in Snow Hill, the first Presbyterian church in America." (p. 675.) But the evidence is distinct that in May, 1684, Rev. Francis Makemie visited that region of Virginia lying

on Elizabeth River, and there he found an organized Presbyterian church. In his own words, written in 1684, he thus describes them: "In my visit to Elizabeth River in May, I found a poor, desolate people, mourning the loss of their dissenting minister from Ireland, whom the Lord had been pleased to remove by death the summer before." (Sprague's Annals, III., p. 6.) Here, then, was a band of Christians organized, and worshipping under the services of a "dissenting minister from Ireland." They could not have been anything else than Presbyterian. Their minister had been with them long enough to make them love their church and love him, and mourn his death; and he died in the summer of 1683. The inference is assuredly reasonable that this church on Elizabeth River, Virginia, had been in existence for years prior to 1683. If so, it was older than Snow Hill or Rehoboth, in Eastern Maryland, planted by Makemie. It was, therefore, the oldest Presbyterian church in America. We have dim and scattered evidences that people professing Presbyterian principles had come to North America as early as 1634, and were living near the present sites of Hemstead, Long Island; Windsor, Connecticut; New Castle, Delaware, and Annapolis, Maryland; but they were unorganized. The oldest Presbyterian organization of which we have evidence is that on Elizabeth River, Virginia.

We feel naturally a loving interest in this feeble, but faithful and affectionate, little band, and desire to know what was their future. And we have reason to believe that God took care of them, and made them the germ of one of the strongest and most zealous Presbyterian churches now in Virginia. After Makemie established his residence on the eastern shore, Rev. Josias Mackie preached at four points, in private houses, in this Elizabeth River region, and the evidence justifies the belief that in 1692, and onward to 1716, when he died, he ministered to the little flock whose under shepherd had been taken away in 1683. In 1710 the existence of this church was recognized by the Presbytery of Philadelphia; and in 1801, under appointment by the General Assembly of Philadelphia, Rev. Benjamin Grigsby came "to itinerate through the lower parts of Virginia." He found an organized church on Elizabeth River, in the borough of Norfolk, of which John McPhail and William McKinder were ruling elders. By invitation, he took charge of the church, and during the years 1802–'3 he succeeded in having a comfortable church building erected, which cost $12,000, all of which was raised within the congregation. This organization is now the First Presbyterian Church of Norfolk, which enumerates among its pastors first that unknown, but never-to-be-forgotten minister who was loved and mourned by his flock; and then Francis Makemie, and Josias Mackie, and Benjamin Grigsby, and John D. Paxton, and Joshua

T. Russell, and Shepard K. Kollock, and John D. Matthews, and Samuel J. Cassels, and S. J. P. Anderson, and finally, George D. Armstrong, who has been the pastor from 1851 to the present time.

Thus, from a germ, humanly weak, but strong in the power of God, has been evolved a church which has been the mother of many other churches in and around Norfolk, who look to her with gratitude and love. This mother church has passed through sore trials and sorrows, under which no power less than divine would have sustained her. In 1855, during the "summer of the pestilence," she was brought almost to desolation. In April, out of her 296 enrolled members, about 250 lived in the city. By the first of September only 87 remained in Norfolk. Some had died, but the larger part had left the city. The pastor remained. Of this small number of 87 very few escaped the pestilence, and 32 died. On the first Sunday of September, when the sun was bright and a fresh sea-breeze was moderating the heat, the pestilence was yet "walking in darkness." This first Presbyterian Church and St. Paul's Episcopal Church, across the street, were the only sacred buildings opened for services. A handful of people attended in each, and, in the first, after a brief service in reading the scriptures and prayer, the pastor pronounced the benediction, and dismissed the people, feeling that all would never meet again in the church below; and so it proved. Yet, when the pestilence passed away, hope returned, and the blessing of God revived the church, and she kept on her way until the war came on, and again her trials were multiplied. Her pastor was removed under an arbitrary military order, and consigned to a harsh exile of fifteen months. Then was shown conspicuously the value of a faithful and devout ruling presbyter. He was William D. Bagnall. His pastor has rendered the following public testimony concerning him: "When, in the season of sore trial to his church, he stood up on the Sabbath to expound the Scriptures, or kneeled by the bedside of the sick to lead in prayer, or conducted the funeral services of the dead—and in all these ways he ministered to the church—he was enabled to do all in such a way as to endear him to God's people, and greatly to honor the office to which the Holy Ghost had called him. God spared this good man to us until the war was over, and something of order restored to the church again, and then, in January, 1867, he "entered into his rest."

After the war, prosperity and success began to return to this church. During the latter part of 1870, and up to the end of March, 1871, a state of continuous religious interest and revival prevailed, although no special or protracted preaching services were held. The result was that 107 persons were added to the

communion of the church, chiefly on profession of faith, within the period of a year.

We have been thus full and minute in our sketch of this church, not from any motives of favoritism, but because the spirit of history demands that the working of germ and of principle shall be shown, rather than disconnected and isolated facts, however imposing they may seem to be.

From this church have come out at sundry times faithful Sunday-school establishers and teachers, who have wrought so well that they were soon followed by colonies who have grown into churches. The organization known as the "High Street" Presbyterian Church of Portsmouth thus came into life, and under its first pastor, Rev. Robert J. Taylor, was approaching a self-sustaining state when the war came on, and in 1862 the pastor became a chaplain in the Confederate army. Meanwhile, another Presbyterian church existed in Portsmouth, the corner-stone of whose edifice was laid August 15th, 1821. It continued under a series of pastors, one of whom was Rev. R. F. Cleveland, the father of Grover Cleveland, now President of the United States. Mr. Cleveland served the church about a year, leaving in January, 1834. After the disruption caused by the measures of 1837–'38, this church became a part of what was popularly known as the "New School" organization. But after the happy meeting together of Old and New School in the South in 1864, the two Presbyterian organizations in Portsmouth, finding that union would be welcomed by nearly all their members, and would bring strength to the reorganized body, united in 1865. Since that time their progress has been onward. They are in the enjoyment of a new, beautiful, and commodious house of worship, and have recently erected attractive lecture and Sunday-school rooms. Their present pastor is Rev. R. L. McMurran. Twenty members have been added within eighteen months, and the congregations are larger than at any previous period of their history.

The Second Church, Norfolk, also traces her parentage to the First, and through her to that immortal germ, planted more than two hundred years ago on "Elizabeth River." This Second Church was fully organized in 1873, and under her first pastor, Rev. Neander M. Woods, enjoyed a season of marked prosperity and progress. Various circumstances have combined, within the past five or six years, to discourage and retard her growth. Yet, true to her maternal instincts, she has been largely instrumental in establishing and building up the Atlantic City Presbyterian Church, known on our records as the "Colley Memorial." This church, under her zealous pastor, Rev. L. H. Baldwin, has grown strongly and healthily, and, having an excellent manse and good church building, is doing well.

Another church, in Brambleton, an out-city of Norfolk, known as the "Park Avenue" Church, recognizes the First Church as her mother; and although her existence only dates back a few years, is already prosperous and growing, and justifies the opinion of one who says: "We believe the church has given tone and character to the entire community, which must be permanently, from every present indication, a choice and influential part of the city of Norfolk." Rev. E. B. McCluer is the pastor. And the mother who, though so prolific, never grows old, because her germ is divine, is now seeking to set in movement another nucleus of Church life in Berkeley, a river suburb of the city.

In the eastern region of our State, within the present bounds of this Presbytery, several causes have operated to impede the progress of Presbyterianism. During the colonial period, a connection between Church and State existed. The Anglican or Episcopal Church was established by law. All were required to conform; and fines and imprisonment were inflicted on those who refused or even neglected compliance. Even after the "Toleration Act" of the reign of William and Mary, a strong disinclination was shown in some of the colonies to recognize its operation in America. And when the Revolution took full effect, and the Established Church was overthrown, a state of things arose which was far from being favorable to the introduction of a system of religious belief and action so thoughtful and deep as that of our venerable Church. With revolution and the overthrow of religious absolutism, came license and disorder, and the uprising, to some extent, of scepticism, and what was somewhat satirically called "free thinking." These prevailed widely among the more refined and cultured classes; and the other classes found the views and usages of other churches more attractive to them than those of our Church. Wherever, therefore, she planted herself and made progress, it was in the midst of many adverse or competing influences. Her existence and advance were always the result, not of favoring environment, but of divine power and blessing. These considerations must be kept in view in order to understand why the outward progress of our Church is no greater in all this region.

So far as we have evidence, the first Presbyterian minister in America was the pastor of that little band on Elizabeth river. His name has never been ascertained. Rev. Francis Makemie came next. He was a native of Donegal county, Ireland, was licensed by the Presbytery of Laggan in 1681, and was ordained by the same church court in 1682, *sine titulo*, but with a view to his coming to America. He preached for a time in Barbadoes; then came to Somerset county, Maryland, and established one or more churches there. He then came to Virginia, and labored

earnestly in the neighborhood of Elizabeth river, but chiefly on the Eastern Shore. In 1690 he was united in marriage to Naomi, the eldest daughter of William Anderson, of Accomack. He continued to reside there, but often preached elsewhere, and was persecuted and very unjustly visited with imprisonment and money costs in 1707, in the colony of New York, then under the English Deputy-Governor, Lord Cornbury. He died at his residence on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in 1708, leaving a widow and two daughters, and leaving also a will, which was duly recorded.

On the Eastern Shore, where this zealous minister labored, lived, and died, there are now five Presbyterian churches, viz.: Holmes and Belle Haven, under the pastorate of Rev. R. D. Stimson, and Makemie, Onancock, and Powellton, under that of Rev. William Chinn. None of them are self-supporting altogether. Holmes and Belle Haven united are nearly so. It seems quite certain that a church building was erected in the lifetime of Makemie near the site of the present building bearing his name, but only traces of its ruins now remain.

Within comparatively modern times, special evangelizing zeal has been manifested by our Church in the region between the head of tidewater and Chesapeake Bay, and the result has been the establishment of churches of our order in Gloucester county, and at Williamsburg and its vicinity, and at Hampton, Suffolk, and Smithfield. Some of these give strong evidences of life and progress. Rev. John G. Anderson has been specially active and efficient in this work.

The counties of New Kent and Charles City have within them two Presbyterian churches, Olivet and Bethany, both under the pastorate of Rev. Dr. James A. Waddell, a lineal descendant from the "blind preacher" of Wm. Wirt. Both have graceful and convenient church buildings of modern structure. Olivet is the daughter of an organization which once worshipped in the old colonial church known as "St. Peter's" in New Kent.

The church in Suffolk is comparatively young, having been gathered by the labors of ministers from Norfolk and Portsmouth, and of Rev. L. E. Scott.

Hanover county is memorable for many reasons, but for none more worthy than for the strange religious *renaissance* which commenced within her bounds about the year 1740, and which resulted in the establishment of a meeting for worship in what was called "Morris' Reading House," and for the labors of Rev. Wm. Robinson, and the shining Christian ministry of Rev. Samue Davies. All the most interesting facts concerning these events have been ascertained, and are set forth in well known current and established historical works. We deem it therefore important only to add some facts not so well known. The old "Pole

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Green" church, in which Samuel Davies preached, had the inscription "S. D., 1756," carved on a plank which made a part of the pulpit. This has been seen by a venerable ministerial brother of another church, who has testified to the fact. The plank has not been preserved, but a part of the pulpit is in possession of Dr. G. W. Pollard, of Hanover, a ruling elder and clerk of session. The house in which the great preacher once lived is still standing, though renovated and to some extent modernized. It is about a mile from "Potomoi," the country seat of James G. Tinsley, Esq., which descended to him from his mother, who was of the Rutherford family. The Hanover Presbyterian churches are now three in number, forming nearly the corners of an equilateral triangle. They are Salem, Bethlehem, and Beulah, united under one organization, which is appropriately called the "Samuel Davies church." The memories of the past are green in the hearts of many of the people of this church, and the labors of her pastors have been blessed. The present pastor is Rev. Charles N. Vanhouten.

The region known as the "Northern Neck" of Virginia embraces the territory between the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers, down to Chesapeake Bay. It was originally granted to Lord Fairfax, and contains in its primitive bounds some of the finest parts of the State. But, in its usual acceptation, it is limited to the territory between those rivers lying between tidewater and the bay. Here have lived families represented by names of wide historic interest, and embracing those of the Washingtons, Monroes, Dandridges, Lees, Fitzhughs, Balls, and Carters. But in no part of Virginia did the faulty religious culture coming from an Established Church and a privileged clergy show itself more plainly. The evidences on that subject have been set forth by Rev. Dr. Foote in the first series of his excellent historical "Sketches" of Virginia and North Carolina, pp. 358–376. A devout Christian, who gave much of his time to the religious instruction of the slaves, thus testifies as to the state of morals in 1755: "The condition of this part of the country is very melancholy. There is little inquiry made after good books among our great folks. Plays, races, cock-fightings, &c., are more acceptable. No wonder that their slaves are neglected. But when I saw them working on the Sabbath, or fishing, or heard they were doing so, or that they could not speak a word without swearing, and were almost as ignorant as brutes of the evil consequences of such things, then consideration and the advice of a Christian friend induced me to do something."

In the counties of Lancaster and Northumberland, in this "Neck," we find efforts for the religious instruction of the people made by Presbyterian ministers as early as the year 1719, and but for the loss of the records of the Presbytery of New Castle, we

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would have much clearer light on the subject. John Organ, a pious schoolmaster from Scotland, lived in this region, and sought to establish meetings for prayer and Scripture readings, and to obtain the services of ministers. Two brothers, James and John Gordon, also did much for pure Christianity here. James was a man of considerable landed estate and wealth. John lived in Urbanna, on the south side of the Rappahannock. He is the ancestor of the Gordon family of Albemarle county. Under their efforts a number of Presbyterian ministers visited Lancaster and Northumberland, embracing the honored names of Samuel Davies, John Todd, James Anderson, and Rev. Messrs. Caldwell, McGill and Criswell. In 1762, Rev. James Waddell, whose name will never be forgotten in this region, accepted a call from the churches here, and continued to minister to them until 1778, when the state of his health obliged him to remove to the Shenandoah Valley. He was never persecuted with imprisonment and fines, but was assailed by the press and by every form of private opposition that could venture to show itself. Though these churches almost expired afterwards, yet even from their ashes have come germs of life which, under faithful evangelization in our own day, have developed some promising forms of Christian effort towards organization.

In the cities of Richmond and Manchester our Church has some strength and standing, though by no means in proportion to the population and importance of those cities, and to the progress of churches of other denominations. The earliest form of a Presbyterian minister that we meet in Richmond is that of Rev. John Durburrow Blair, whose life has been sketched with so much vividness by Col. George Wythe Munford in his book entitled "The Two Parsons." Mr. Blair was appointed a licentiate by the Presbytery of Hanover, October 28th, 1784. Soon afterwards he was called to the pastorate of the "Pole Green" church in Hanover, and was ordained and installed as such. He removed to Richmond about 1792, and preached and labored there and in that region until his death, January 10th, 1823. The church organization which commenced its career under his ministry was first known by the title of "The Presbyterian church on Shockoe Hill." It was organized in September, 1821. In January, 1838, in consequence of the dissensions between the Old and New School parties, East Hanover Presbytery, by request of some of the elders and of about ninety members of the First Presbyterian church, Richmond, regularly organized them as a separate church, then called "The Fourth Presbyterian church." On the 20th of September in the same year, 1838, the Presbytery sanctioned the union of this church with the Shockoe Hill church, and reorganized the two churches thus united into one, entitled the "United

Presbyterian church of Richmond," with 228 members. At a church meeting held May 30th, 1870, the name of "The Grace Street Presbyterian church" was adopted, and was afterwards sanctioned by the Presbytery.

This church, after having passed through a baptism of fire and through many vicissitudes, is now one of the strong churches of the city, having a very handsome and costly church building and a refined and enterprising congregation. Among its pastors since the time of John D. Blair have been the well known names of John Blair Hoge, Stephen Taylor, A. D. Pollock, Joseph C. Stiles, Charles H. Read, and Thomas Drew.

The First Presbyterian church of Richmond was organized by Hanover Presbytery, June 18th, 1812, having been collected and brought unto life and form by the labors of John Holt Rice, who was its first pastor, and continued in office until 1823. He has been succeeded through more than half a century by William J. Armstrong, William S. Plumer, Thomas Verner Moore, Thomas L. Preston, and Robert Pollok Kerr. The location of its building has been changed five times, making successive ascents from the bank of James river, near Twenty-eighth street, to the corner of Grace and Madison streets. It is a strong and zealous church, and was never more earnest for the cause of Christ than now.

The Second Presbyterian church has never changed either its locality or its pastor. It has always occupied a position of great prominence and advantage, near the corner of Main and Fifth streets. In 1843 Rev. Moses Drury Hoge took charge of the colony from the "First church," which, in February, 1845, was organized by this Presbytery as the Second church. Its progress has been constantly onward, interrupted or rather impeded only during the years after 1850, when the congregation were temporarily involved in debt for their church building. But all difficulties were happily surmounted. The pastor, though often called away, has remained with his flock through all seasons, whether of calm or storm, brightness or darkness, peace or war. By the blessing of God on his labors, this church has become the largest in numbers and one of the strongest in influence of all the churches of our order in Virginia, and not much exceeded in these respects by any in the South. During the past three years the pastor of this church has added to his already abundant labors by preaching to crowded congregations every Sunday night during winter and early spring, assembled at the "Old Market" Hall, in a part of the city occupied by people generally indifferent to attendance upon church services.

The Third Presbyterian Church is located on Church Hill, the most picturesque part of a very beautiful city. It commenced its life in 1835, at Rocketts, near the wharves and shipping-

houses of lower Richmond. In 1850 its new church edifice on the "Hill" was completed and occupied. But in 1873 the caving in of part of the railway tunnel, under the foundations of the building, rendered it unsafe, and again it moved. Its present building is on the corner of Broad and Twenty-sixth streets. The life of this church has been subject to great vicissitudes; but the blessing of God to her has been manifest, and her progress, though never rapid, has been sure. She has had many pastors, or ministrants, among whom have been Alexander Mebane, Halsey Dunning, Arthur Mitchell, James T. Leftwich, Philip B. Price, Wm. E. Hill, E. T. Baird, S. J. Baird, C. R. Vaughan, Wm. N. Scott, and the present pastor, Robert R. Howison. Among her members have been many eminent for piety and zeal.

The Fourth Presbyterian Church, as now existing, is on Grace street, in the extreme western part of the city. Its life began in June, 1882, as a colony from the Second Church, and has been subject to changes and adverse influences, which have impeded its growth; but within a year past marked progress has attended the work. Its first pastor was Rev. Peyton H. Hoge, whose work of founding was successful. He was succeeded by Rev. A. R. Holderby, in a brief session of labor. The present pastor is Rev. J. Calvin Stewart, who, after earnest labor for several months, was installed Sunday, October 9th, 1887, and has much to encourage him in his pastoral field.

Manchester, with a population of about 10,000, has only one Presbyterian church. Though it embraces both male and female members of marked piety and zeal, it has never become strong enough to be definitely self-supporting. Its church building needs improvement; but, within a few years past, it has shown courage and enterprise by building a convenient manse close to the church. It has had a life of about seventeen years, during which time it had only two ministers—William A. Campbell and Theodorick Pryor Epes. Rev. Dr. E. T. Baird, now deceased, preached for a time to the congregation just before the church was organized, in 1871. During his pastorate in the First Church, Richmond, Rev. William J. Armstrong preached frequently in Manchester.

About four and a half miles from Richmond, near Hunslet's Station, is the only Presbyterian church in Henrico county. It is called "Mizpah," and was organized in 1884. The church building is very attractive in architecture and appointments. The members, though not numerous, are earnest and zealous. "Mizpah" has had only one pastor—William F. C. Gregory—who was distinguished for his ability and unremitting labors, and whose death, within a few months past, has been deeply deplored.

Between Richmond and Fredericksburg, on the railroad, is the

pleasant village of "Ashland," in the slashes of Hanover, not far from the birthplace of Henry Clay. The college of "Randolph-Macon" is there located; and we have there a church of our order which has always exhibited life and warmth. It was organized in the latter part of the year 1871, and now has a comfortable church building and a manse. Its ministers have been E. T. Baird, who was useful and beloved; William Frost Bishop, whose pastorate lasted from 1877 to 1883, and was prosperous and successful; R. B. Grinnan, now a foreign missionary in Japan, and the present pastor, Rev. A. R. Holderby. Above Ashland, in Caroline county, a small Presbyterian organization exists, but barely lives.

The venerable town of Fredericksburg, at the head of tidewater, on the Rappahannock River, has a Presbyterian church which may be considered as holding place on the northern frontier of our Presbytery. This church commenced her existence, under the labors of Rev. Samuel B. Wilson, in 1805. He came as a missionary, and found only two living Presbyterians in the town. The ideas involved in vital Christianity had so faded away that the themes of natural depravity, the necessity for the "new birth" by the Holy Spirit, and union with Christ, were heard with something like astonishment. But the presence of the Spirit, accompanying and giving power to the preached Word, was soon manifest. A church was collected, which has continued ever since to live and work for Christ. It has always been remarkable for its steadiness and consistency, and for its liberal giving according to its means, and almost beyond them. Its pastors have been Samuel B. Wilson, George McPhail, A. A. Hodge, Tucker Lacy, Thomas W. Gilmer, and the present pastor, James P. Smith, who was aid of General Stonewall Jackson during the war, and has been for some years stated clerk of the Synod of Virginia. A beautiful memorial chapel, erected at a cost of about $25,000 by Seth B. French, of New York, in memory of his deceased daughter, stands on the same lot with the church edifice, and under similar title as a Presbyterian church.

Twenty-two miles south of Richmond is the city of Petersburg, where there are three Presbyterian churches. That known as "Tabb Street" commenced in 1812, under the labors of Rev. Benjamin H. Rice, a younger brother of John Holt Rice. Previous to his coming, few Presbyterian ministers had ever preached in the city. Samuel Davies preached there in 1750. He was coldly received, and was stigmatized as a "new light." When Benjamin H. Rice came to Petersburg, his brother, afterwards so eminent, was laying the foundations of a church in Richmond. Mr. Rice's preaching was blessed by the Spirit. A number of the people of Petersburg were hopefully converted, and "Tabb Street" was or-

ganized in the fall of 1813. It has grown into a very strong and active church. After Benjamin H. Rice, it was ministered to in succession by John E. Annan, Wm. S. Plumer, E. C. Hutchison, S. J. Love, John Leyburn, A. B. Vanzandt, A. W. Miller, and Wm. J. Hoge, who died deeply lamented in July, 1863, after a pastorate of less than a year, during which twenty-four additions to the church had taken place. Rev. Dr. R. L. Dabney then ministered to them for four months, followed by E. C. Vass for eleven months. E. H. Rutherford then succeeded as pastor, followed by T. D. Witherspoon, R. P. Kerr, and the present pastor, John W. Rosebro. The Second Church has also prospered under its pastors, Rev. Theodorick Pryor, John Miller, G. H. Petrie, and S. K. Winn. The "Old Street" Church was formed by a colony from "Tabb Street," July 30th, 1876. Its life has been somewhat precarious, but there is now a promise of success. Rev. Chalmers Moore is the present pastor, and is laboring earnestly in the field.

The Presbyterian churches in Brunswick county, and at Namozine in Amelia, and Hebron in Dinwiddie, are now all united under one pastor, Rev. Thomas T. Jones, whose labors have been earnest and indefatigable. To the Brunswick Church Thomas P. Hunt, Francis Bartlett, George W. White, and Theodorick Pryor successively ministered. The church at Amelia Courthouse seems to have originated about the year 1828, and to have drawn much of its early spirit from four female members, Anne F. Bolling, Martha C. Vick, and Frances and Martha C. Robertson, who were dismissed to it in that year from the church in Petersburg. It has enjoyed, at various times, preaching by strong ministers, occasionally or statedly, among whom may be named Theodorick Pryor, Wm. S. Plumer, John H. and Benjamin H. Rice, J. H. C. Leach, W. S. White, John Kirkpatrick, Benjamin M. Hobson, Richard McIlwaine, and Samuel B. McPheeters. Rev. Drury Lacy preached in the lower part of Amelia, beginning in 1827. It is now under the pastoral care of Rev. Geo. H. Denny, who had been preceded by Revs. D. W. Shanks, Wm. U. Murkland, and H. T. Darnall.

The church in Powhatan was organized in 1825, and has been ministered to at various times by such men as Daniel Penick, Joseph E. Curtis, Henry V. D. Nevius, J. M. Kirkpatrick, Wm. A. Campbell, and Benjamin H. Dupuy. That church and the church in Goochland county have, for some years, been without regular pastoral care, and have suffered depression.

The church in the county of Nottoway has had a prosperous career, and is now in a state of vigorous life under her venerable pastor, Rev. Dr. Theodorick Pryor. This church began under the labors of Rev. Robert Roy in 1824, and has been ministered to

through various periods by Revs. Amasa Converse, Wm. S. White and Edward Martin. Dr. Pryor has had two pastorates in Nottoway—one beginning in 1832 and running to 1853, and the other beginning after the war in 1867 and still continuing. Many seasons of revival have been enjoyed by this favored church. She has an excellent central brick church edifice at Nottoway Courthouse, and good church buildings elsewhere, three of which have been secured during Dr. Pryor's second pastorate—one built, two purchased and thoroughly repaired, and a mission chapel erected. Her membership is full; and her life may be considered as the ideal at which a country church in Eastern Virginia may be permitted to look with hope and encouragement.

For important supplement to regular pastoral or stated ministrations, we note with interest the fact that, during the past four years, the Presbytery has enjoyed the services of Rev. William A. Campbell as an evangelist, and his work through every part of the destitute fields within our bounds has been crowned with success, in bringing many to a saving knowledge of the truth in Christ, in strengthening and encouraging feeble churches, and in grouping and obtaining pastors or supplies for fields of labor heretofore neglected.

Our historical sketch would be incomplete without some account of the colored element of society within our bounds, and of our efforts to christianize it. Prior to the late civil war large numbers of colored people were communing members of the various churches throughout our bounds, especially of the churches south of James river. They sympathized, in religious feeling and usage, with those who, under the direction of Divine and Almighty Providence, stood to them in relation of masters and mistresses, controllers, employers, teachers, and guardians. And they cheerfully followed them into our churches, and followed with them after Christ. But since the war, they have almost universally drifted away from us, under influences which we deplore, but for which we do not feel ourselves to be, in any measure, responsible. Some few churches and congregations of colored people, of our Church order, exist in Brunswick county, in Petersburg, in Lynchburg, and at Ashland, in Hanover. We are not neglecting means for their good, and our Presbytery has a special Committee on Evangelization of the Colored People, of which Rev. James P. Smith is chairman. But we cannot report, as history, any favorable progress in this matter. So far as our Church is concerned, the best method of reaching and Christianizing them yet remains an unsolved problem.

We conclude with a brief summary of the leading statistics of East Hanover Presbytery, as given by official reports, up to April

1st, 1887: Ministers, 32; licentiates and candidates, 7; churches, 43; elders, 151; deacons, 101; total number of communicants, 4,473. In Sunday-schools and Bible classes: teachers, 599; scholars, 4,169.

Respectfully submitted,

R. R. Howison, *Chairman.*
George D. Armstrong,
Hugh Blair,
} *Committee.*